

WALT DISNEY'S *Cinderella*

# The Heart of a Champion





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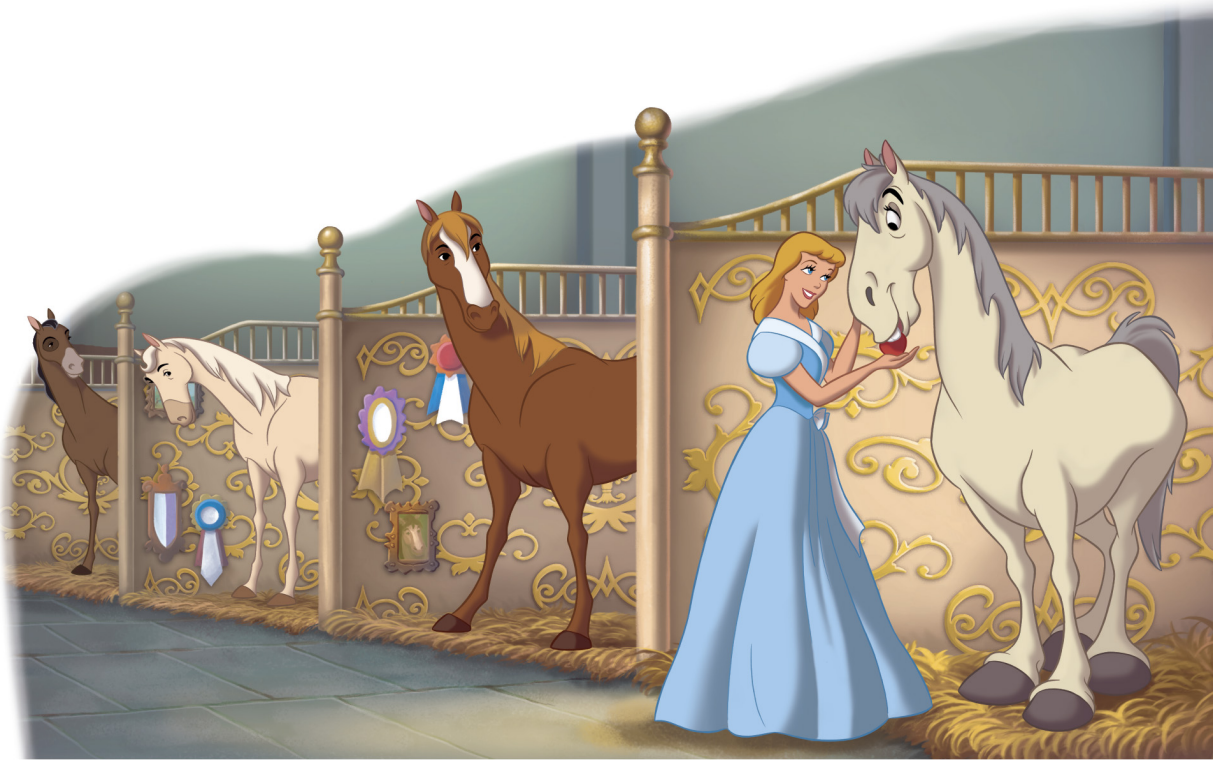
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One day, Cinderella was visiting her old friend Frou in the royal stable when her mouse friends, Jaq and Gus, told her that a messenger had arrived at the palace! Cinderella said good-bye to Frou and the other horses and hurried off to hear the news.

It seemed there was going to be a horse show. The King usually entered it, but he never did very well. Now that Cinderella was part of the family, he thought she would be the perfect person to represent them.

“Why, I’d be delighted,” Cinderella said when the King suggested it.



The next thing Cinderella knew, the King was leading her back to the royal stable. The Prince and the Grand Duke went with them.

“The finest horsecwoman in the kingdom must have the finest horse in the kingdom,” the King said. “I have a stable full of champions, my dear. We’ll choose the best of the best, and you can begin training right away. Ah, yes! I can see those blue ribbons already!”

The King ordered his groomsmen to saddle up his horses—all one hundred and twenty-two of them—and bring them out to the courtyard.



Cinderella climbed onto the back of the first horse. She knew the stallion was the King's favorite. But he was just a bit too small. The next horse, however, was too big.

Cinderella sat on one horse after another, but none of them were quite right.



Finally, Cinderella dashed back into the stable. "I'll be right back!" she called. "I know the perfect horse!"

Moments later, Cinderella returned, leading Frou!

The King stared at Cinderella and Frou in disbelief.

“Frou may be old,” said Cinderella, patting the horse’s shaggy mane, “but he has the heart of a champion!”



The first thing Frou did, however, was trip over a nearby water trough. Cinderella flew over his head. She landed in the trough with a *splash*! The other horses whinnied with laughter. Frou hung his head.

“Don’t worry,” Cinderella said to the King. “By next week, we’ll be ready.”



Cinderella and Frou trained for hours each day.

But Frou kept making mistakes. No matter how sweetly Cinderella urged him, he missed every jump.



And no matter how firmly she steered him, he went the wrong way every time.



“Oh, Frou,” Cinderella said, patting his head, “I know you can do it!”  
No one else was quite so sure—especially Frou!



Suddenly, Cinderella’s fairy godmother appeared.  
“I overheard your little mouse friends talking,” she explained. “They said you need a miracle. So, here I am!”



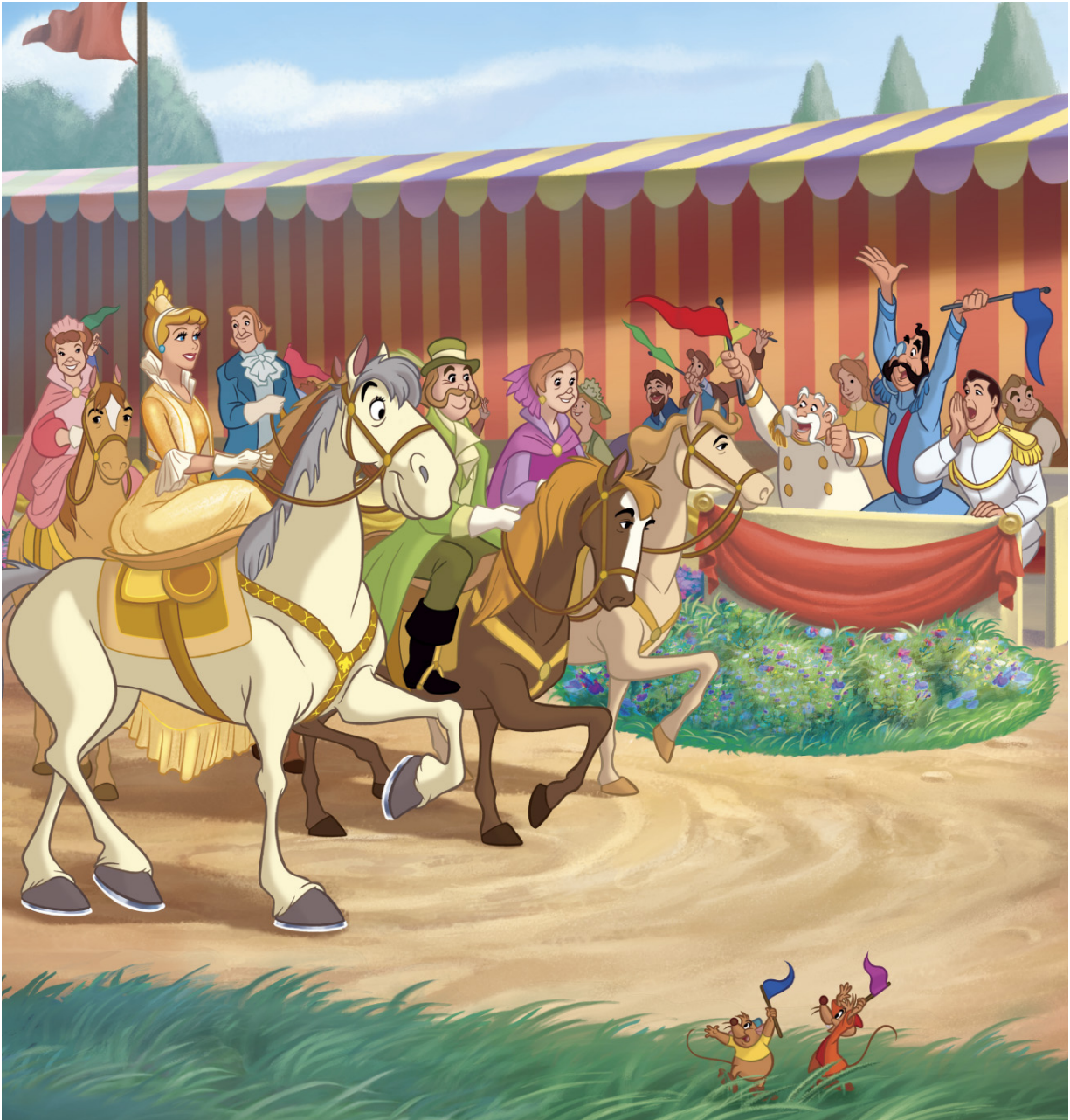
Cinderella laughed and shook her head. “Oh, that’s kind of you,” she said. “But we don’t need a miracle, just a good night’s sleep.”

“My dear,” her fairy godmother whispered, “*you* know Frou can win, and *I* know Frou can win, but our friend Frou doesn’t believe in himself yet. I’m going to help.”

With that, she raised her magic wand and waved it at Frou. Suddenly, Cinderella and Frou had new outfits! A glass horseshoe appeared on each of Frou’s hooves!

“With these horseshoes, you’ll never miss a step,” the Fairy Godmother said.





The next day at the horse show, Cinderella saw more fine horses than she ever had before. They all looked like champions—but so did Frou! He held his head up high and stamped his hooves proudly. The King could hardly believe that Frou was the same horse he'd been watching trip and stumble all week long.

Frou cleared every jump with ease. He never took an awkward step or a wrong turn. He even managed a graceful little bow at the end.



Cinderella smiled. Her fairy godmother had been right. Frou had only needed a reason to believe in himself.



In the end, there was no question about who belonged in the winner's circle—Princess Cinderella and Frou!

"You know," the King told the Grand Duke, "I had a special feeling about that horse all along. . . ."

After the horse show, Frou returned to his stall at the palace stable, with his head a little higher, his back a little straighter, and his glass shoes ready for the next time duty called.

